



THE TEXAS POLICY VOICE FOR HEALTHCARE AND BIOSCIENCE

October 16, 2020

The Honorable Senfronia Thompson
Chairwoman, House Committee on Public Health
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

RE: Interim Charge 1, Senate Bill 748

Dear Madam Chair Thompson and Honorable Committee Members,

The Texas Healthcare and Bioscience Institute (THBI) is the Texas public policy voice for the healthcare and bioscience industry. Our membership consists of biopharmaceutical companies, research institutions, medical device companies, economic development entities and service companies providing unparalleled networking and synergy to effectively address the public policy needs of Texas' growing life sciences community.

The Texas life sciences industry is committed to expanding the boundaries of science by discovering, developing, and delivering innovative and needed medications to patients. It is the patient that is the ultimate beneficiary of such advances. The membership of THBI is dedicated to creating an environment where such discoveries flourish and thrive.

As you know, our industry is working around the clock, racing for treatments and vaccines to stamp out the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, we are also helping lead the way, with groundbreaking, rapidly developing research that has allowed us to hold out collective hope for an end to this pandemic.

During this pandemic, we have realized the importance of ensuring that all Texans, even the smallest and youngest, have access to the diagnoses, treatments, and cures they need.

In Texas more than 400,000 infants are screened annually for 56 out of the 61 current identified conditions listed on the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services' Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP). As new screens are added to the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP) at the federal level, we encourage the state newborn screening lab to implement an expedited process to include additional screens on the state's newborn screening panel, within two years of RUSP approval, and begin testing without delay to ensure all babies have access to needed screenings, diagnoses, and treatments that allow them to live longer, healthier lives.

The state's newborn screening program is one of the most important, cost-effective, and preventive public health strategies administered. With the passage of Senate Bill 748 during the 86th Legislative Session, Texas now has the resources to cultivate a healthier population



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amongst some of the most vulnerable Texans by ensuring opportunities for potential early detection, identification, and treatments for rare diseases are made available.

We extend our sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to provide feedback and thank you for your continued leadership on this issue; and we look forward to partnering with you again during the 87th Legislative Session. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me directly at 512-708-8424.

Sincerely,

Tom Kowalski
President & CEO